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Collaborative Practices in Special Education: An Exploratory Study

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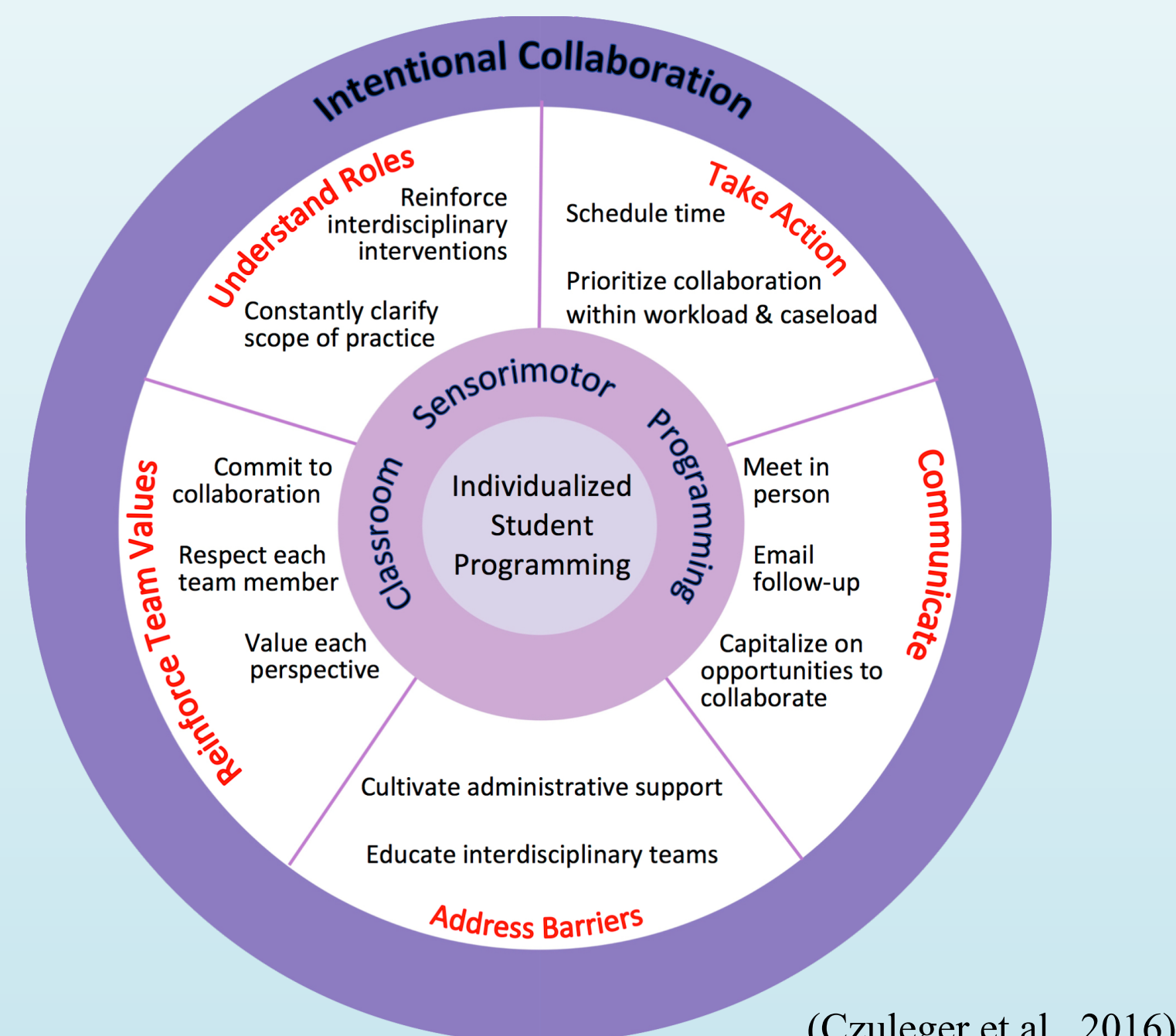
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Collaborative Practices in Special Education: An Exploratory Study

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Introduction and Purpose

- Professional collaboration in special education is essential for student success (Barnes & Turner, 2000)
- However, IDEA legislation does not guide how such collaboration should take place (Pub. L. 108-446)
- The Conceptual Model for Collaboration (CMC) created by Czuleger and colleagues (2016) described professional collaborative practices of a transdisciplinary team at a special education center



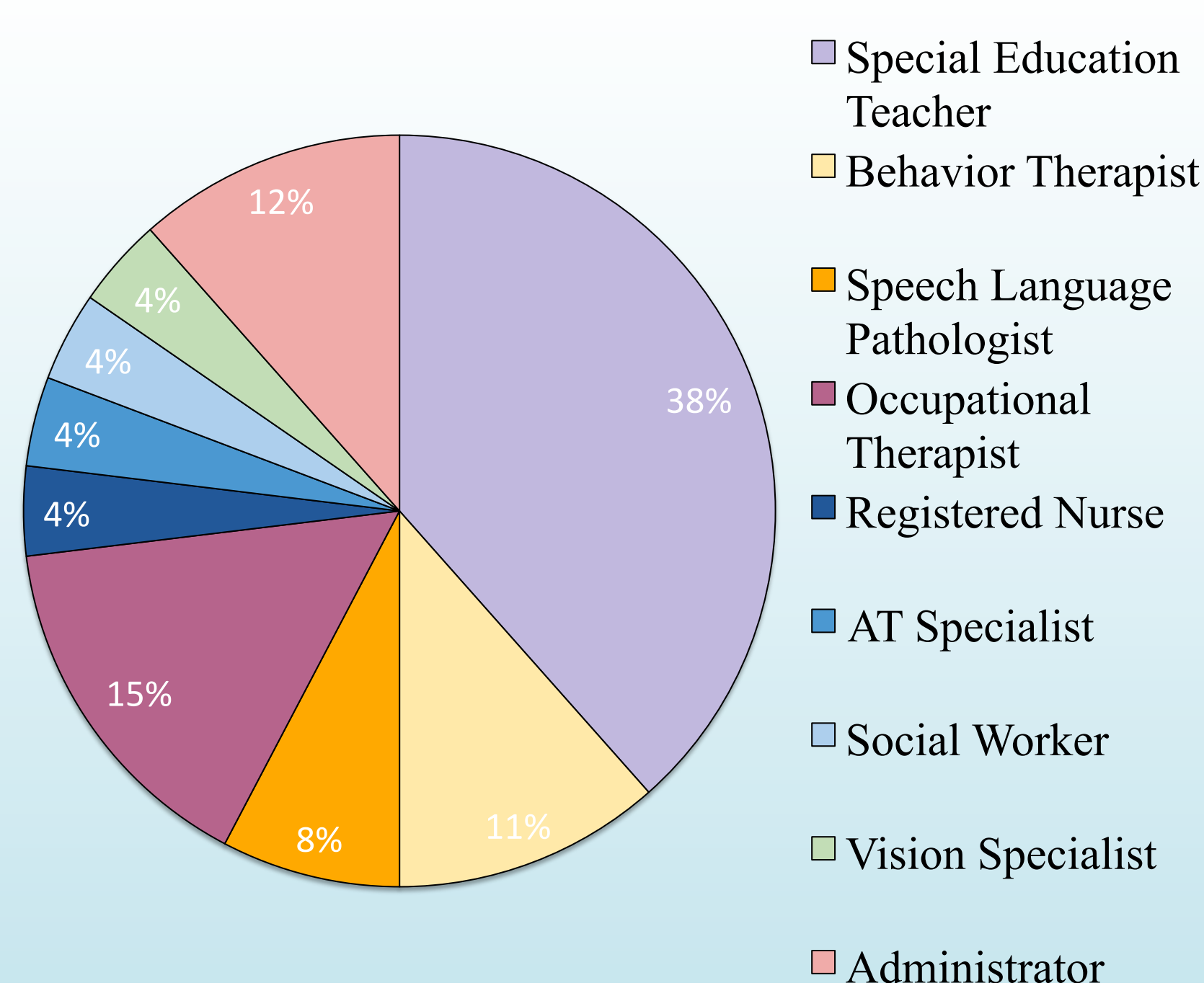
(Czuleger et al., 2016)

The purpose of this study was to examine the CMC in a broader context

Design

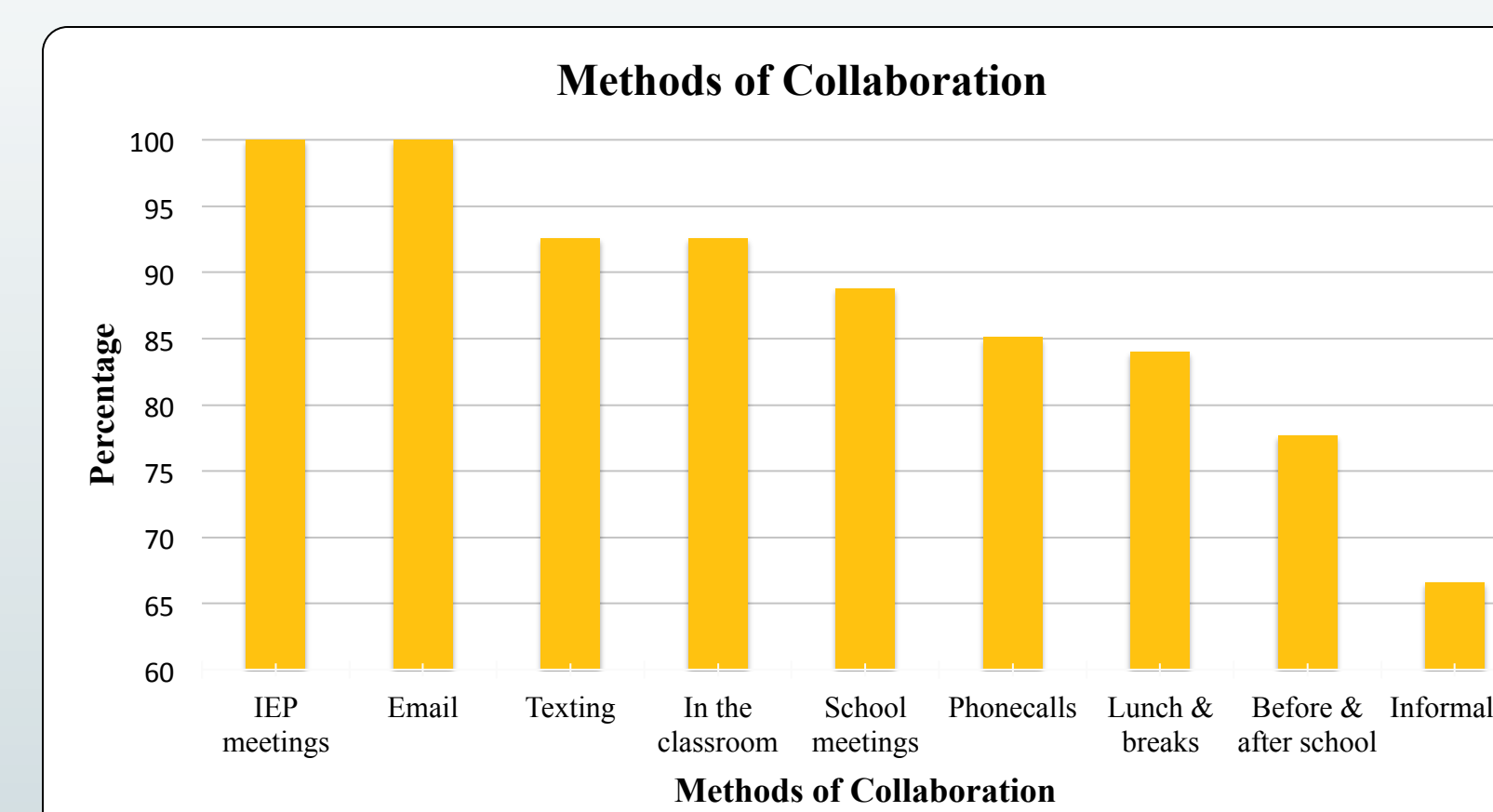
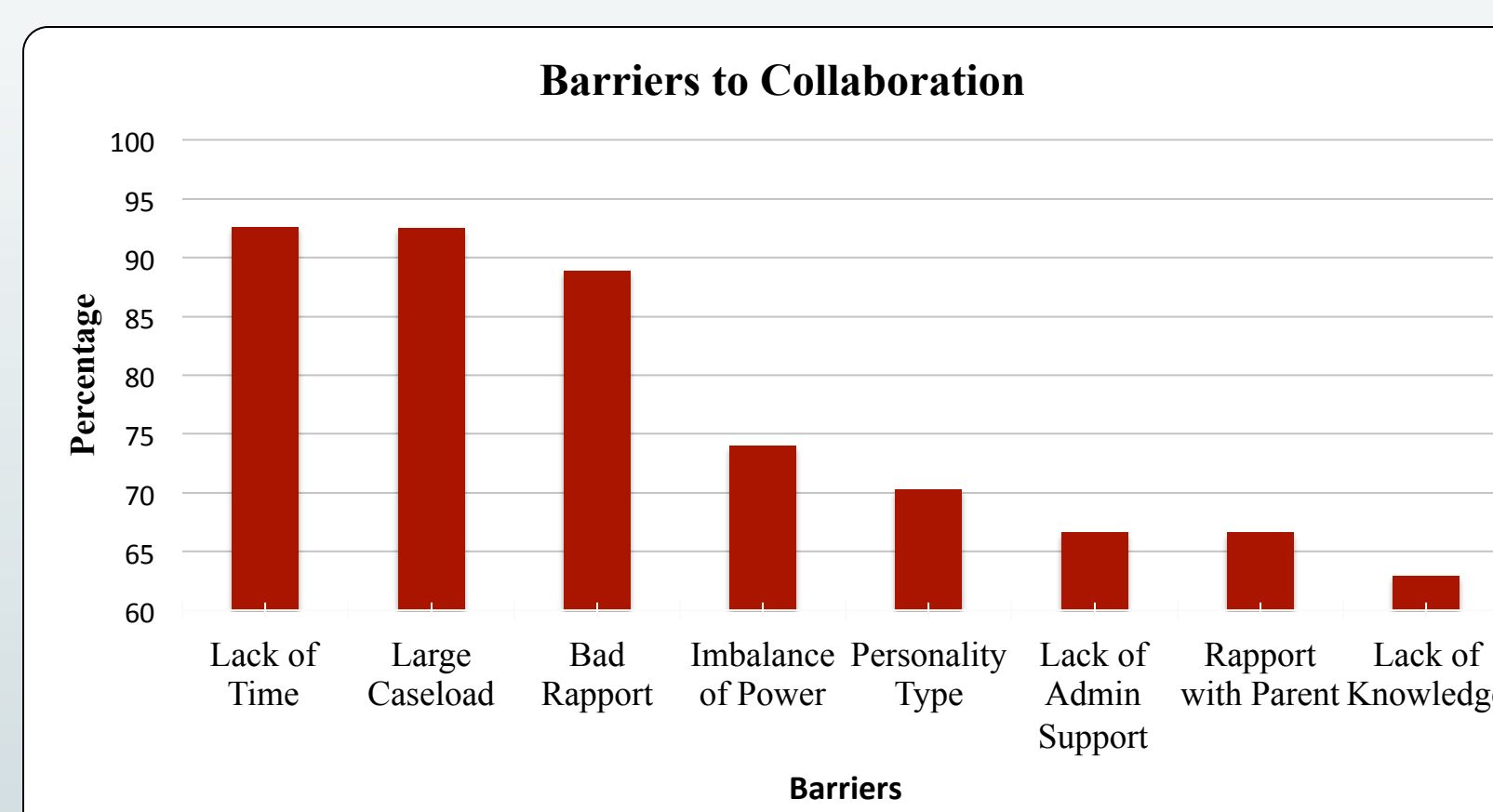
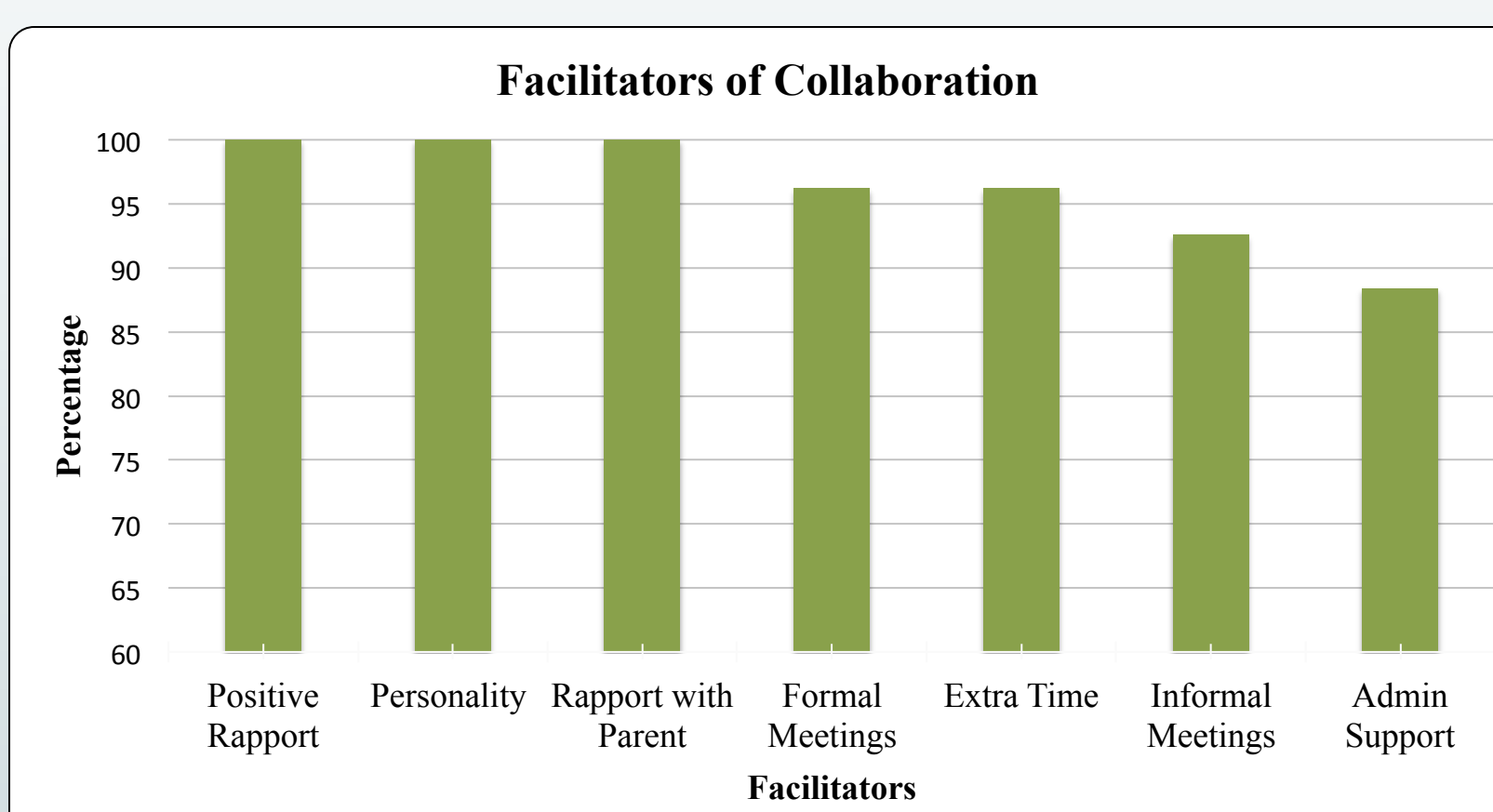
- Quantitative exploratory design - online survey
- Participants from a SELPA in northern California, n=27 (~30% response rate)

Participants

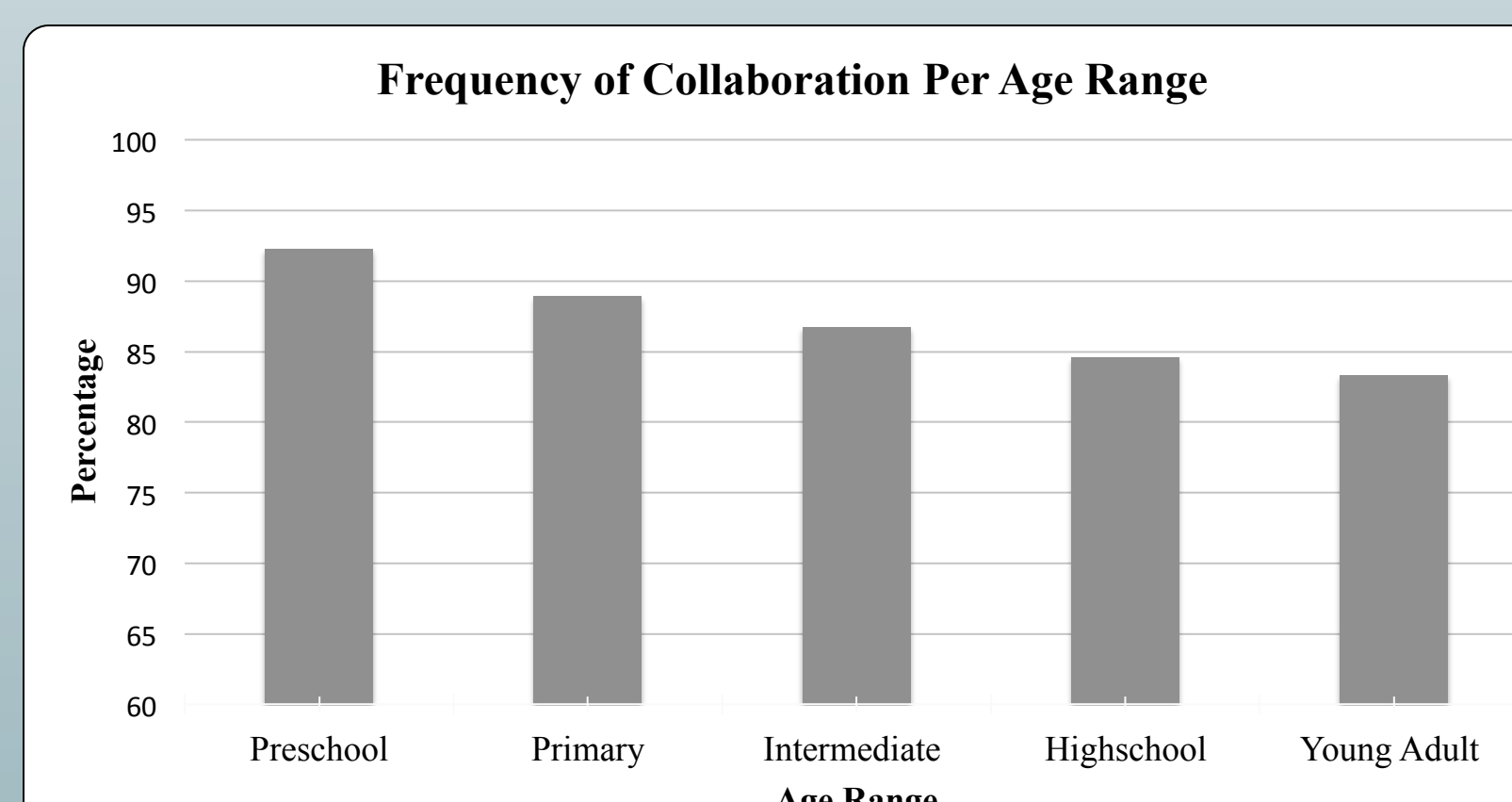
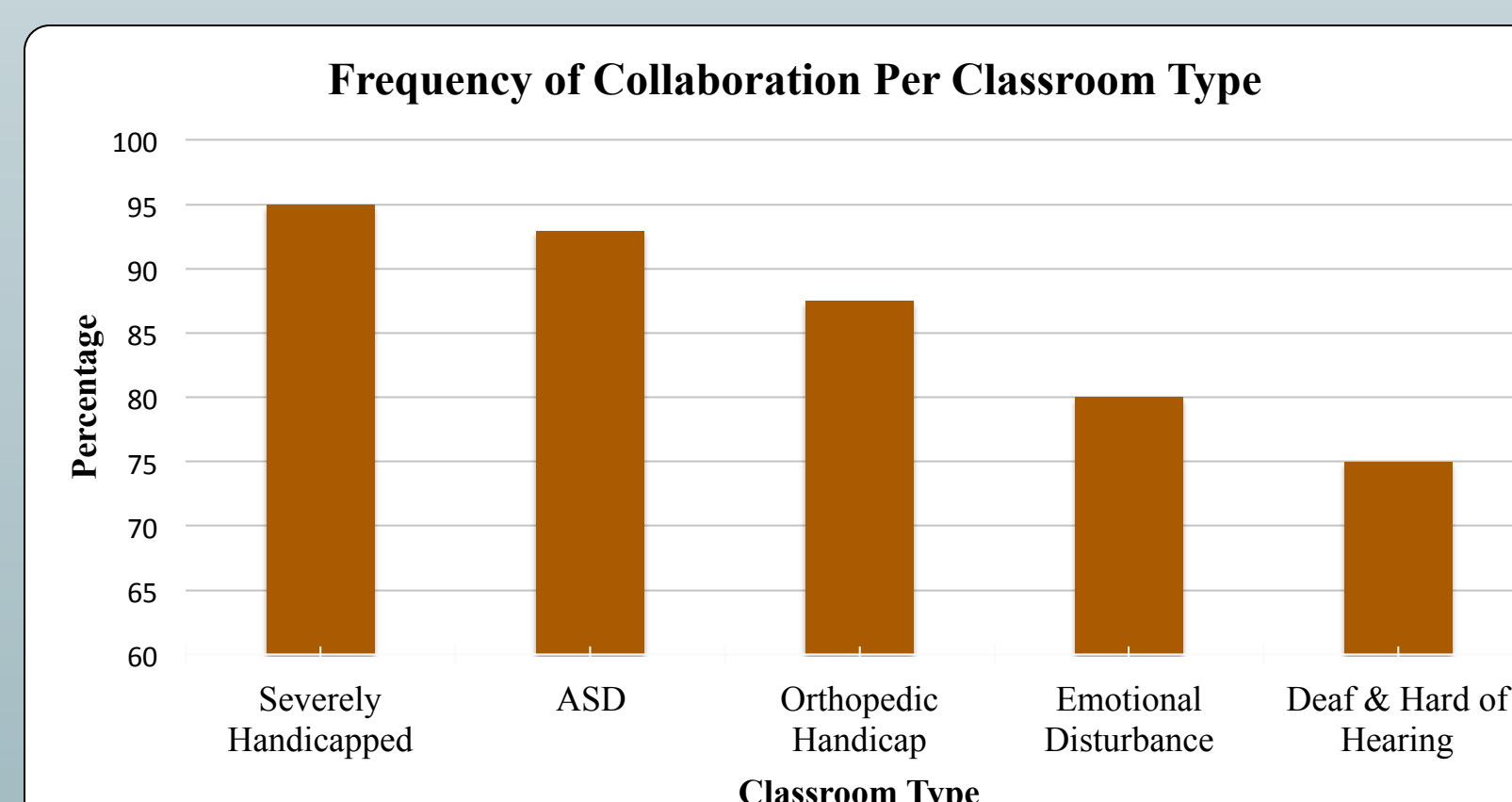


Results

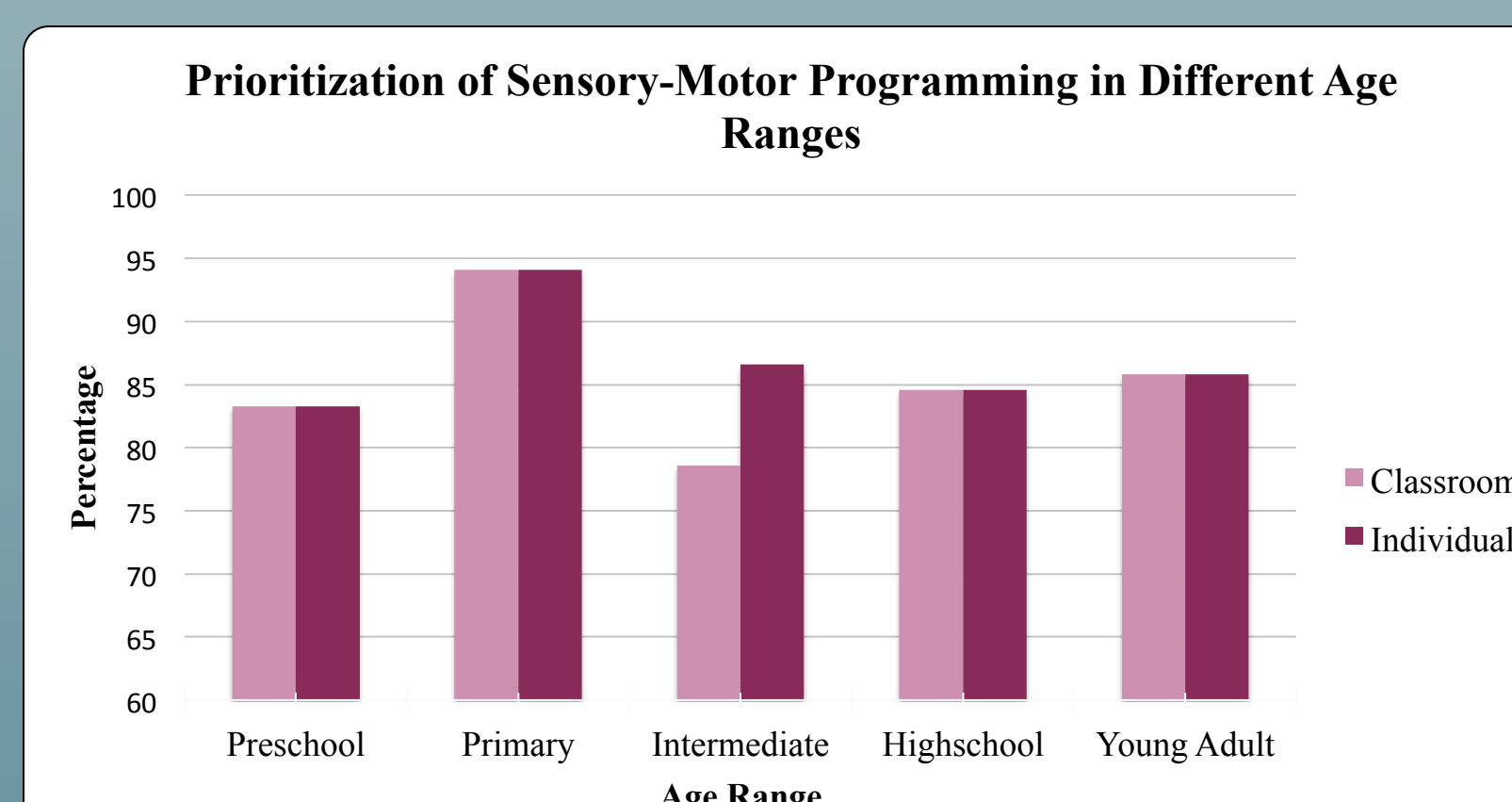
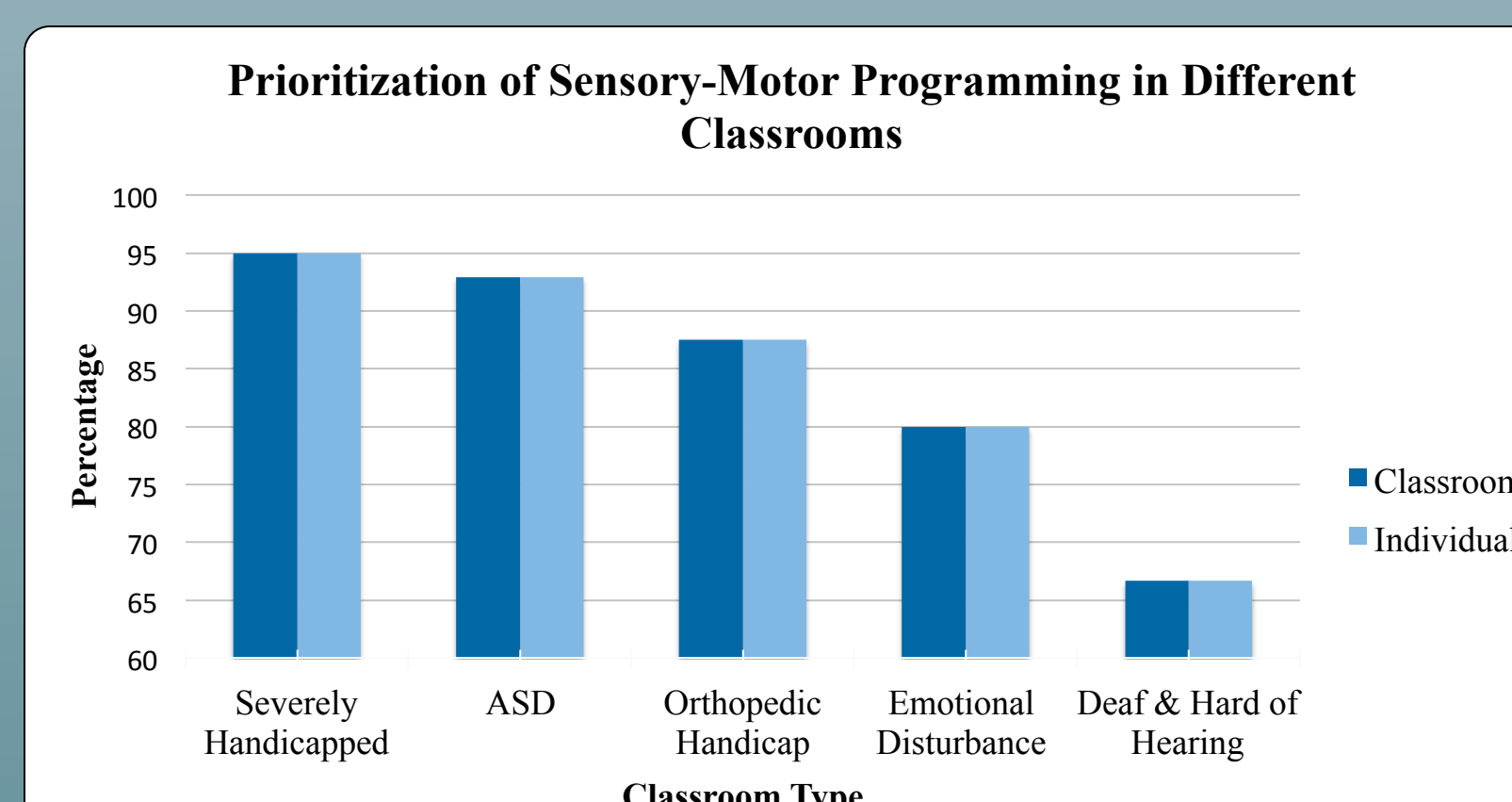
Question 1: What are common facilitators and barriers to collaboration and how does it take place?



Question 2: What is the frequency of collaboration in different classroom types and age ranges?



Question 3: How much are sensory-motor programs prioritized in different classroom types and across age ranges?



Quotes

Sensory Strategies

My students need to find and utilize strategies that help them self-regulate and manage their over or under activity alertness/internal sensation in not only my class, but generalized over all settings of their life.

Facilitators

Respect among members of the team - you don't have to be besties, but you do have to respect each other!

Barriers

When members of the team do not value the contribution of other disciplines. When team members see kids/challenges as "an OT thing" or "just behavior" or "speech issue" rather than a combination.

97% of participants agree that good collaboration leads to improved student outcomes and professional development

Moderate correlation between understanding of OT and the prioritization of sensory-motor programming for both classrooms, $r = 0.52, p < .05$; and students, $r = .49, p < .05$

Moderate correlation between frequency of collaboration and the prioritization of sensory-motor programming for both classrooms, $r = .56, p < .05$; and students, $r = .48, p < .05$

Selected References

Barnes, K. J., & Turner K. D., (2000). Team collaboration practices between teachers and Occupational Therapists. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 55(1), 83-89. doi:10.5014/ajot.55.1.83
Czuleger, B., Garnica, E., Phung, J., Rzepka, M., & Hess, L. (2016, October) *A collaborative approach to school-based sensorimotor programs*. Poster presented at Occupational Therapy Association of California Conference, Pasadena, CA
Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Pub. L. 108-446, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.

Discussion

Over 80% of participants agreed on common facilitators to collaboration

Lack of time, large caseloads, and bad rapport are strong barriers to collaboration

Most collaboration takes place in IEP meetings, through email and text messaging

Frequency of collaboration is high in all classroom types and across all age ranges

Respect and understanding of OT has supported prioritization of sensory-motor programming for both the student and the classroom equally

Implications for Practice

Team members are committed to collaboration for (1) student outcomes and (2) professional development. Suggested strategies include:

- Plan face to face meetings
- Use "virtual" methods of communication (e.g., email, texting, Google docs, etc.)
- Promote your professional scope of practice as part of daily service delivery and make an effort to respect and understand other professional roles
- Partner with administrators to facilitate best practices in collaboration
- Prioritize rapport building as part of professional development, both formally and informally
- Collaborate with OT to build classroom based sensory motor programming

Acknowledgements

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